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2 HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

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Subject: "Market News for the Housekeeper." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S.D.A.

To market, to market this morning to buy some fruits for the family. A few points from experts about these seasonable summer products help us housekeepers to buy wisely and get the most for our money.

Suppose now that you're going to purchase some of those warm weather favorites, melons--watermelons, perhaps, or cantaloupes or honeydews. Would you like a little information from an expert about choosing them?

Well, according to Mr. Wells Sherman of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, melons are a bright spot on the summer fruit market--that is, bright for the consumer. Prices of watermelons are low. So are the prices of cantaloupes and honeydews.

By the way, did you know that weather has a lot to do with the quality of cantaloupes? Sunshine and dry hot weather make melons thrive and grow sweet. Prolonged wet weather has a bad effect on their quality.

Honeydews? They'll be plentiful this year right up to cold weather. With them, as with most other fruits, prices are below the level of recent years.

Now comes that question so many people ask, "How can you be sure to select good melons when you go to market? Are there any points that indicate quality or is selection just a lottery after all?"

Mr. Sherman says that you often do have to take a sporting chance on some kinds of melons. No way to prevent it. Cantaloupes and honeydews spoil so quickly once they get fully ripe that they are likely to be picked green for shipping. A woman I know seems to have good luck following her sense of smell in choosing honeydews, honey balls and cantaloupes. Of course, she also picks out the heaviest ones and notices whether the skin shows signs of ripening. Another sign that many people use as a guide to quality is a heavy netting on the skin of cantaloupes. But of course, all signs fail sometimes.

So much for melons. Now for some other summer fruits. Peaches, for example. So far this seems to be rather an "off" year for peaches. In all the big orchards of the East and Middle West the peach crop is light. No cheap peaches in sight this year, that is, cheap in comparison with the other abundant fruits. Last year, you remember, Georgia had a record crop. This year it has only about a fourth as many.

But when peaches are scarce, we use more summer apples. Summer apples

have been on the market for some weeks. Also California has a heavy crop of Bartlett pears to meet the demand for fruit. When it comes to quality, the Bartlett can hold its own with any other variety of pear. Many people consider it the most delicious of all for eating raw. Here's an economy tip about pears. When you're buying Bartletts in quantity, try to get some that look green as well as a few that show more yellow than green. The yellowish ones are ready to eat at once; the greenish ones will turn yellow in a few days. Pears are one of the few fruits that are better ripened off than on the tree. The texture is better if they are picked somewhat green and allowed to ripen at room temperature. As for that tempting red blush on the cheek of a Bartlett pear, it's just another case of beauty that is only skin deep. A pear is neither sweeter nor nuicier for the high color on the outside. As for russet coloring, that does no harm and doesn't affect the flavor. But pears showing much russetted surfaces are usually cheaper.

Of course, you know that pears and bananas are the two fruits that you never store in the refrigerator. They both keep in better condition at room temperature.

That's all the news for the market-goer today. Just as well, too, since so many questions are waiting for answers and since I have a recipe today that I promised you way back last week.

Let's take down the recipe first. And then we'll use up any spare time on the questions.

Suppose you want something different, something cool, and something colorful to start a summertime dinner with. What shall it be? How would you like a jellied fruit juice appetizer? You can serve it iced cold in little glass cups garnished with a thin slice of any kind of fruit and a tiny sprig of mint.

This is something quite new. Next time you have company to dinner, and want something a bit different, just turn to this jellied fruit juice recipe in your notebook.

Ingredients? Seven. Here they are:

1 and 1/2 tablespoons of gelatin
1/2 cup of cold water
1 and 1/2 cups of boiling water
1/4 teaspoon of salt,
2 cups of fruit juice or a combination of juices
2 tablespoons of lemon juice
Sugar to taste

Once more, these seven ingredients. (Repeat.)

Soak the gelatin in the cold water for five minutes. Then dissolve it with the boiling water. Stir in the fruit juice, the lemon juice and the salt. Sweeten as desired, but be sure not to make it too sweet. Appetizers are successful only if they are a little tart. Chill the mixture. When it is firm, beat it slightly and serve it in individual glass cups garnished, as we mentioned with any colorful fruit or a sprig of mint.

Of course, the light colored fruits generally make the prettiest jelly. A delicate rose shade, for example, is more attractive than the dark color of blackberry juice.

By the way, this jellied appetizer is a fine way to use up left-over

juice. You may have some juice left from canning, or from preparing fresh fruits or from a jar of canned fruit.

Now let's have a brief look at the letters. The first one asks how to clean a white felt hat. Dry cleaning with an absorbent powder is one good way to clean a white felt hat. Such substances as chalk or magnesium carbonate or fuller's earth or corn meal are called absorbents because when you spread them on stained fabrics, they often absorb the dirt. Then you can brush off the powder and the dirt will come with it. Absorbents are helpful if the stain is light or freshly made, but they are not effective enough when the stain is set or very large.

Well, cover your soiled hat with corn meal or fuller's earth or any other absorbent in a thick layer. Do it at night and rub the powder in well. Leave it on until morning. Then brush it off and the soil will disappear with the powder.

Or, make a paste of calcined magnesia and cold water and brush it well over the hat. When the paste is perfectly dry, brush it off with a clean stiff brush.

Another question. "What makes a cake fall?

Answer. Perhaps you aren't using a reliable recipe. A cake will fall if it contains too much sugar or too much butter or too little flour.

If your proportions are wrong, no method of mixing or of baking can produce a successful cake. Speaking of proportions, I must remind you that accurate measures are very important. A word about the flour too -- sift it always before you measure it. If you use a good recipe, measure your ingredients accurately, and bake your cake long enough, it can't fall.

As for sponge cakes, you can ruin them by taking them out of the pan while they are still hot. Invert the pan with the cake in it and let the cake cool for at least an hour so the walls of the air cells will become stiff.

Here's a question about evaporated milk. "What is the best way to whip evaporated milk?"

Answer. Cover the <u>unopened</u> can with cold water. Bring the water to a boil and boil for five minutes. Now place the can on ice or in the refrigerator until it is chilled. Then pour out the amount of milk you need into a bowl and beat it until the mixture forms a peak. Of course you'll want to save the remaining milk. Keep it in the refrigerator and you can whip it again without further heating and chilling.

Tomorrow we'll talk about making jams and preserves. Also, I'll give you two seasonal and inexpensive recipes.